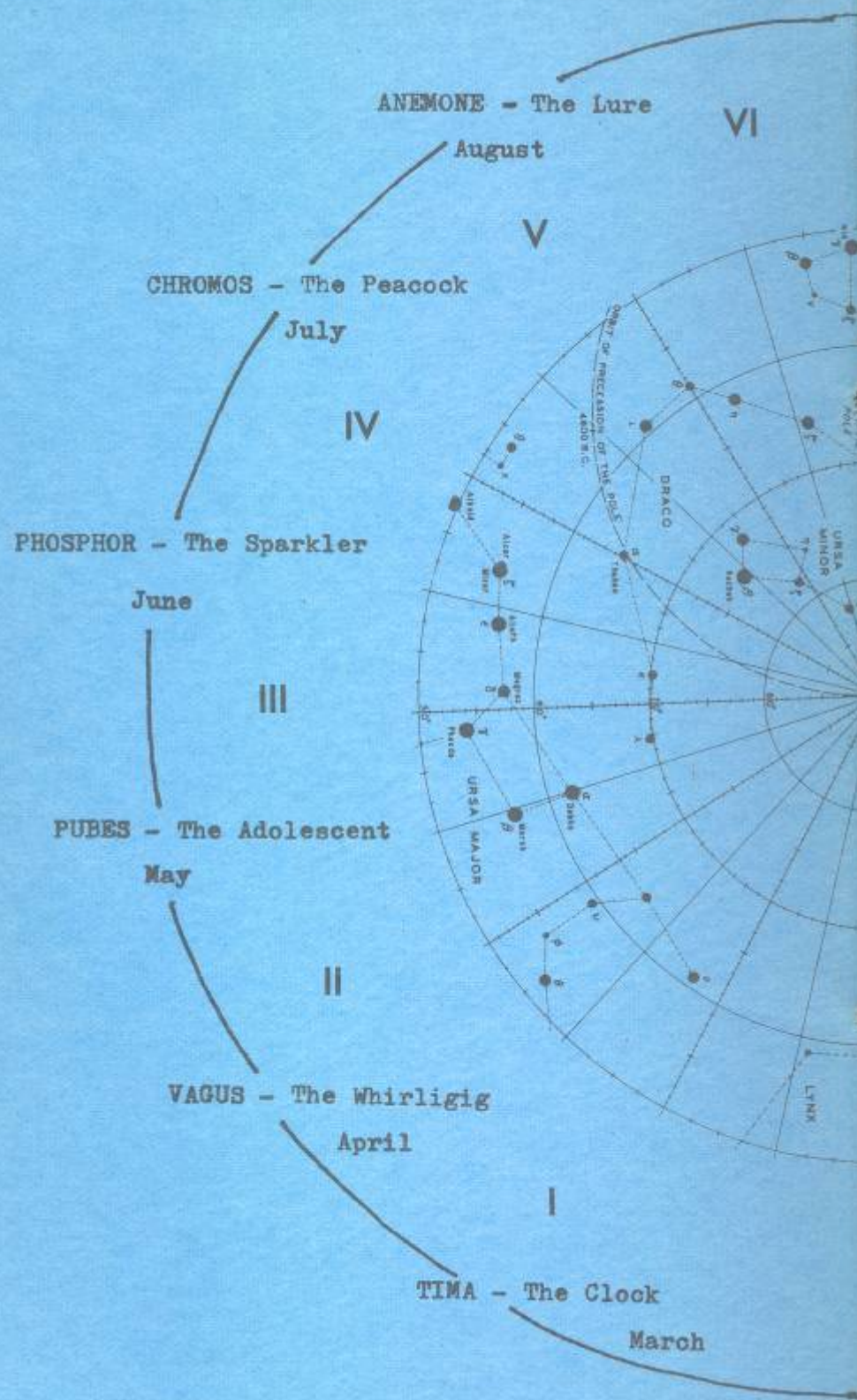


A ZODIAC OF POEMS

ELIZABETH BARTLETT



A ZODIAC OF POEMS

by

ELIZABETH BARTLETT

AUTOGRAPH EDITIONS

San Diego

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BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

Poems of Yes and No
Behold This Dreamer
Poetry Concerto
It Takes Practice Not to Die
Threads
Twelve-Tone Poems
Selected Poems
The House of Sleep
In Search of Identity
Dialogue of Dust
Address in Time

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Elizabeth Bartlett

With illustrations by Elizabeth Bartlett

A Zodiac of Poems was published in 1979 by Autograph Editions in a limited, signed, and numbered edition designed and illustrated by Elizabeth Bartlett. The book is now out-of-print. The author's literary executor, Steven James Bartlett, has decided to make the book available as an open access publication, freely available to readers under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-NoDerivs license, which allows anyone to distribute this work without changes to its content, provided that both the author and the original URL from which this work was obtained are mentioned, that the contents of this work are not used for commercial purposes or profit, and that this work will not be used without the copyright holder's written permission in derivative works (i.e., you may not alter, transform, or build upon this work without such permission). The full legal statement of this license may be found at:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Bartlett (1911-1994) was an American poet and writer noted for her lyrical and symbolic poetry, creation of the new twelve-tone form of poetry, founder of the international non-profit organization Literary Olympics, Inc., and known as an author of fiction, essays, reviews, translations, and as an editor. She is not to be confused with the British poet (1924-2008) of the same name. For more detailed information about her life, work, and critical commendations, see the Wikipedia article:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Bartlett_%28American_poet%29.

Bartlett's most notable achievements include:

- Creation of a new form of poetry, "the twelve-tone poem," adapting Arnold Schonberg's musical system to the verbal, accented sounds of language. Called "the Emily Dickinson of the 20th Century," her concise lyrics have been praised by poets, musicians, and composers alike.
- Publication of 16 books of poetry, a group of edited anthologies, and more than 1,000 poems, short stories, and essays published, for example, in *Harper's*, *Virginia Quarterly*, *New York Times*, *North American Review*, *Saturday Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and in numerous international collections.
- Recipient of many fellowships, grants and awards, including NEA, PEN Syndicate, fellowships at the Huntington Hartford Foundation, Montalvo, Yaddo, MacDowell, Dorland Mt. Colony and Ragdale, travel grants, and honors for introducing literature as part of the Olympics.
- Founder of the Literary Olympics, to restore literature, specifically poetry, as a vital part of the Olympics as it once had been in ancient Greece.

Bartlett's poetry came to the attention of leading poets, writers, and critics as diverse as Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Mark Van Doren, Conrad Aiken, Allen Tate, Alfred Kreymborg, Robert Hillyer, Louis Untermeyer, Rolfe Humphries, John Ciardi, Richard Eberhart, Richard Wilbur, Maxine Kumin, Robert M. Hutchins, Kenneth Rexroth, William Stafford, and others. Over the years, Bartlett maintained an active and extensive correspondence with eminent poets, writers, and literary critics; evident throughout this collected literary correspondence are strong statements attesting to the importance of her work.

Bartlett's husband, Paul Alexander Bartlett (1909 – 1990) was an American writer, artist, and poet. He made a large-scale study of more than 350 Mexican haciendas, published novels, short stories, and poetry, and worked as a fine artist in a variety of media. For more detailed information about his life and work, see the Wikipedia article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Alexander_Bartlett.

Elizabeth Bartlett's son, Steven James Bartlett (1945 –), is a psychologist and philosopher who has many published books and articles in the fields of philosophy and psychology. For more detailed information about his life and work, see the Wikipedia article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_James_Bartlett.

OTHER BOOKS BY ELIZABETH BARTLETT

Dialogue of Dust
Address in Time
Memory Is No Stranger
Threads
Twelve-tone Poems
Around the Clock
Candles
The Gemini Poems
Poetry Concerto

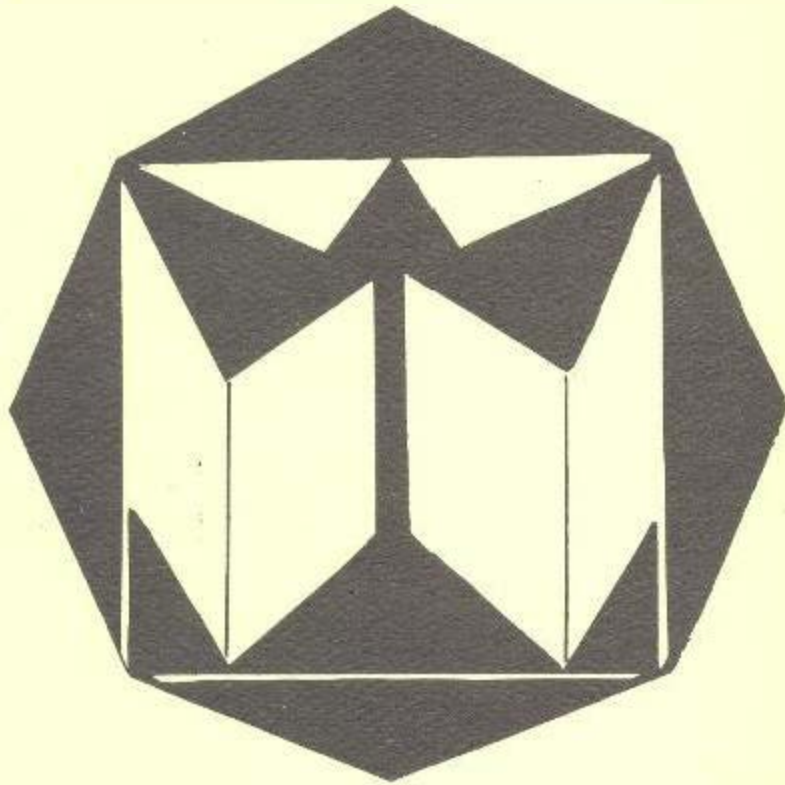
The following books are freely available through Project Gutenberg

(<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/49768>):

Poems of Yes and No
Behold this Dreamer
It Takes Practice Not to Die
The House of Sleep

TO THE READER

*If the Sun and Moon should doubt,
they'd immediately go out.*



TIMA

Tima starts the year,
mandala of all being

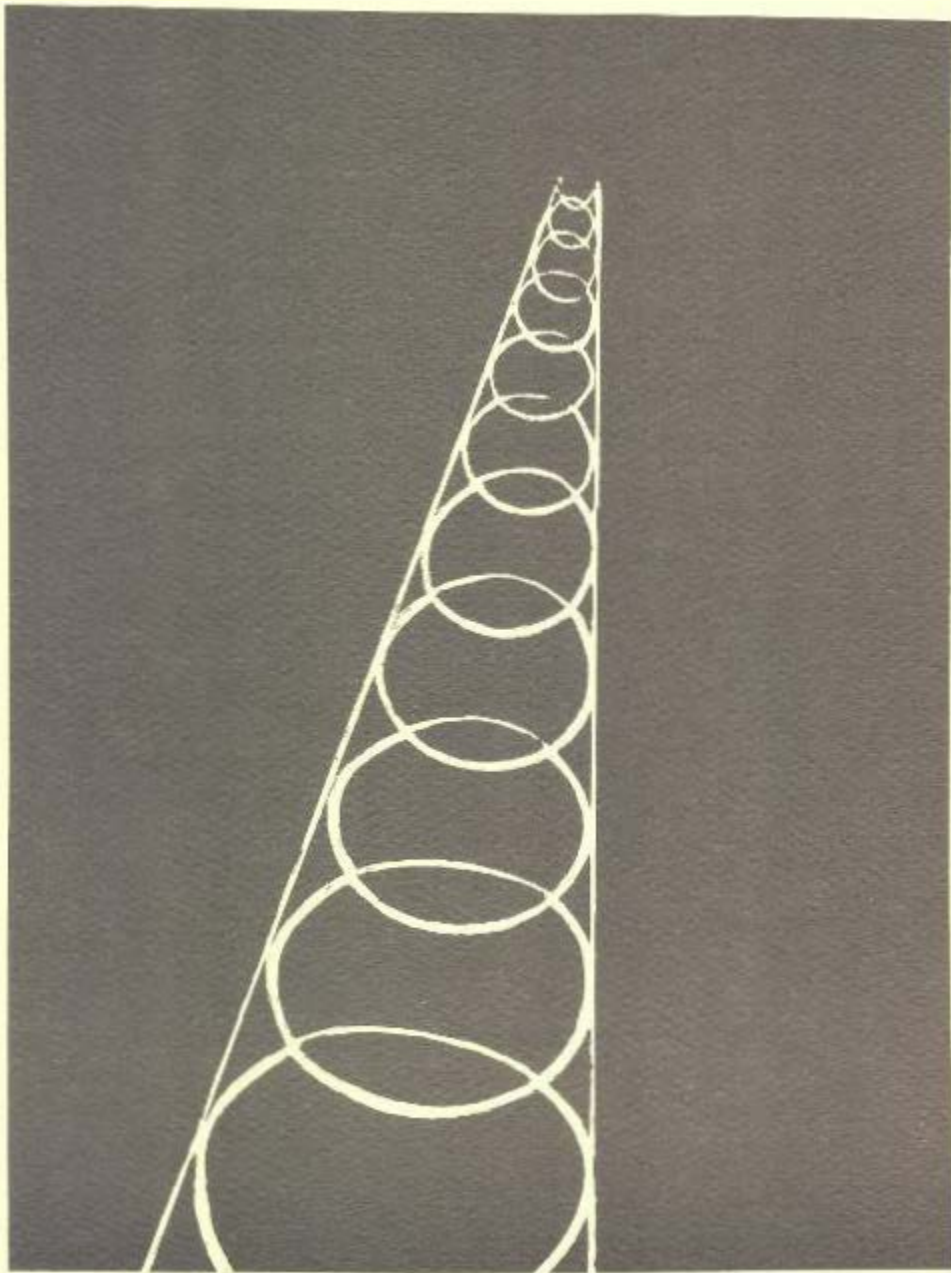
Who moves through infinite space
to record the ties

Of each existence
to past, present and future

Who measures off each moment
with hands none can bribe

On feet none can change
from their course and direction.

In each infant's cry, you hear
her steps, feel her touch.



VAGUS

Next in line comes Vagus,
the guardian of whims

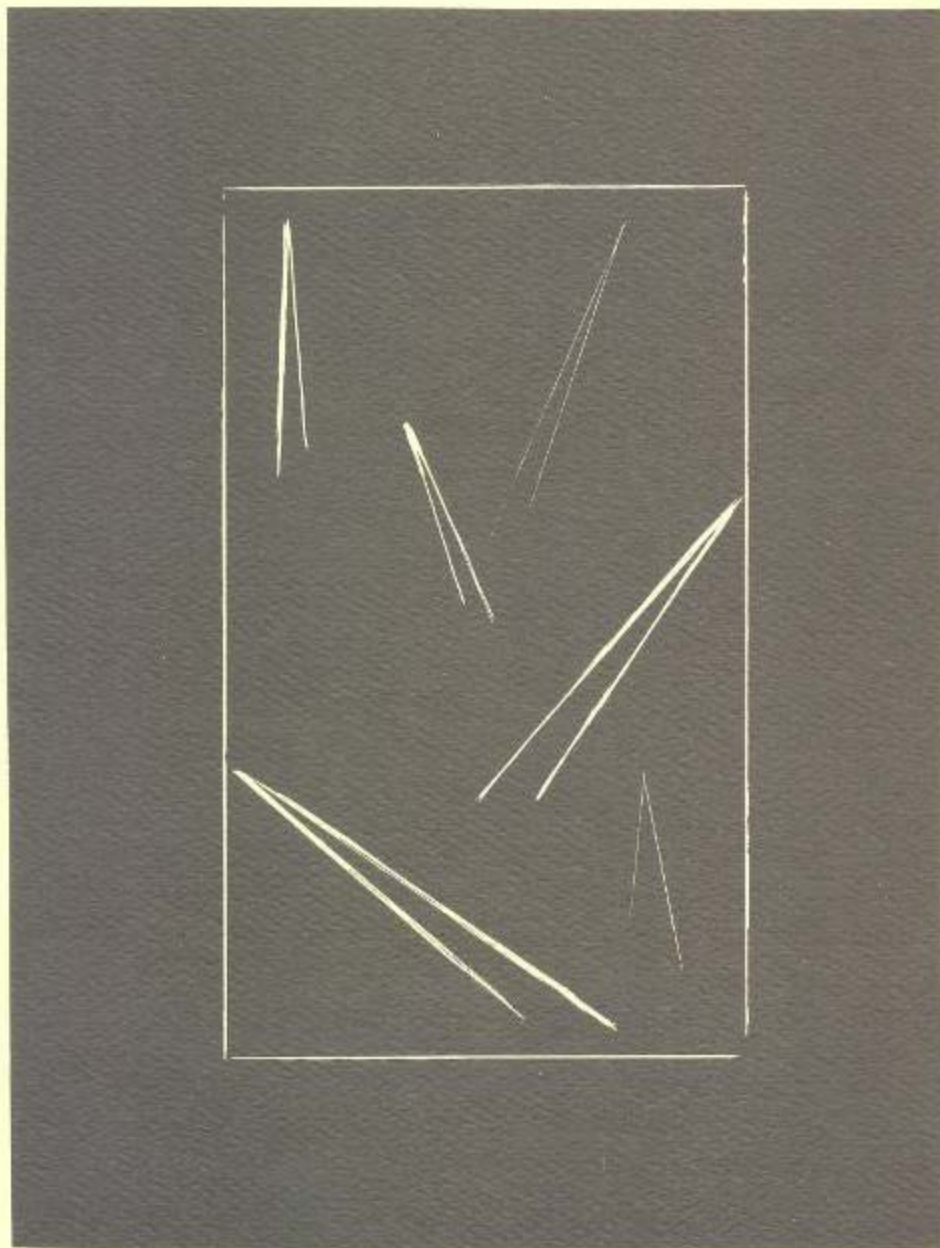
Who promises all things
a wish-fulfilling wind

That blows every which way
and yet leads to nowhere.

Like children's whirling tops,
the wishes bounce and roll

In colorful display,
a carnival of hopes

That sweep the crowd along
with shouts, music and cheers.



PUBES

Pubes follows,
solemnly gathering the grains

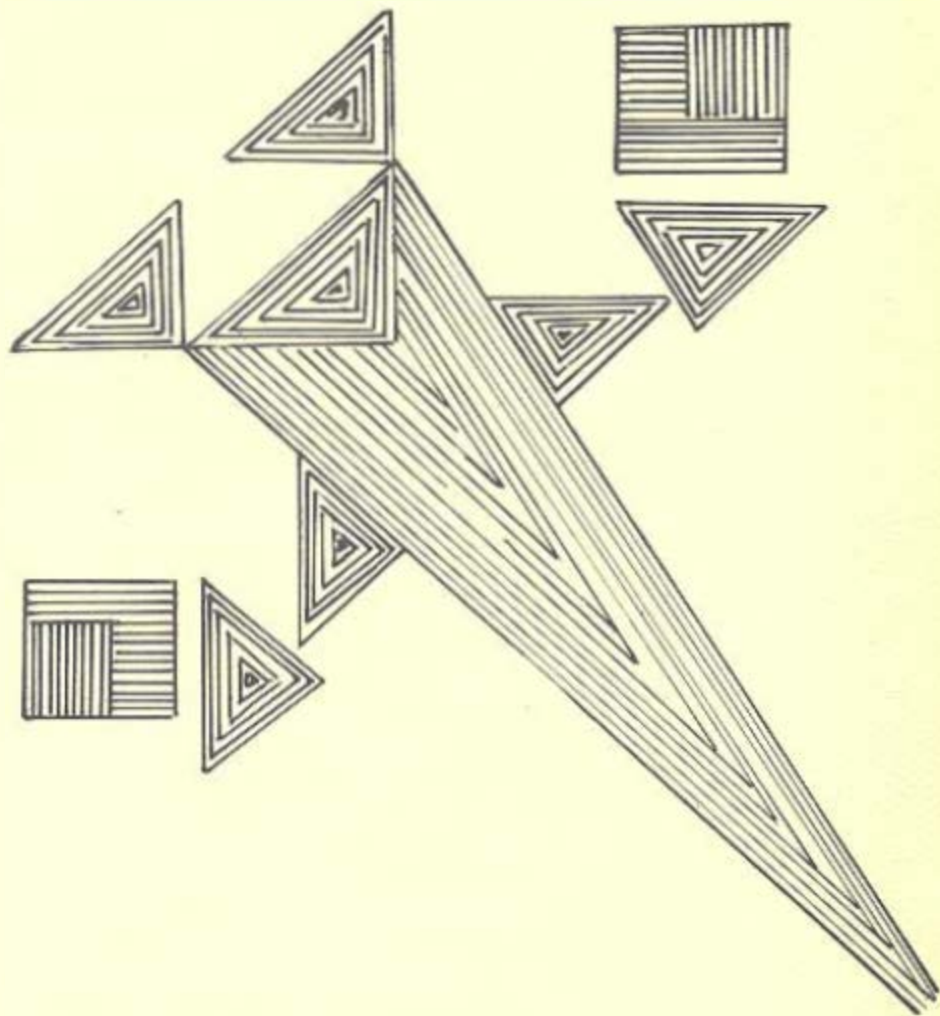
That gender spring
with warm tendrils and moist gametes

Linking the dark
to light and quickening with seed.

Spikes, tufts, bracts, stalks —
all point to the sun like fescues

To illustrate
the alphabet of the season

Its bold symbols
the language which all nature speaks.



PHOSPHOR

Phosphor brings in the summer
with long, sparkling rays

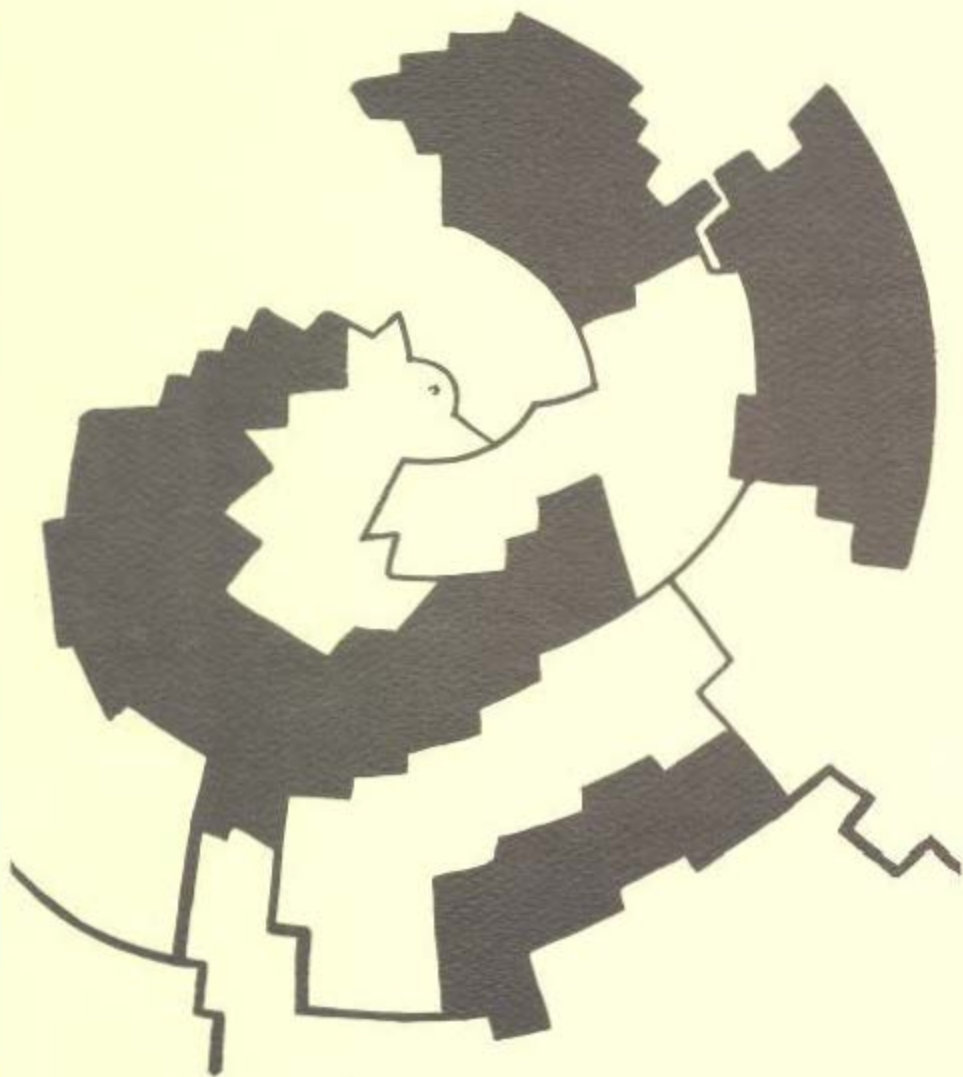
To make mornings of evenings
and shake sleep from eyes.

With unbounded energy
aroused by delight

He calls for wine and dancing,
to light up the song

Igniting full moons whose sparks
flash like fireflies

From fields and woods, marsh and lake,
then flare through the night.



CHROMOS

Now Chromos struts across the sky
with peacock tail

Rivalling dawn
with the ego's mirroring eyes

And the voice of as many birds
fiercely shrieking

To be seen, to be heard, as one
without equal

Whose plumage more than makes up for
small head, big feet

Since beauty exalts the praiser
as much as praise.



ANEMONE

Here comes Anemone
who tempts both wind and waves

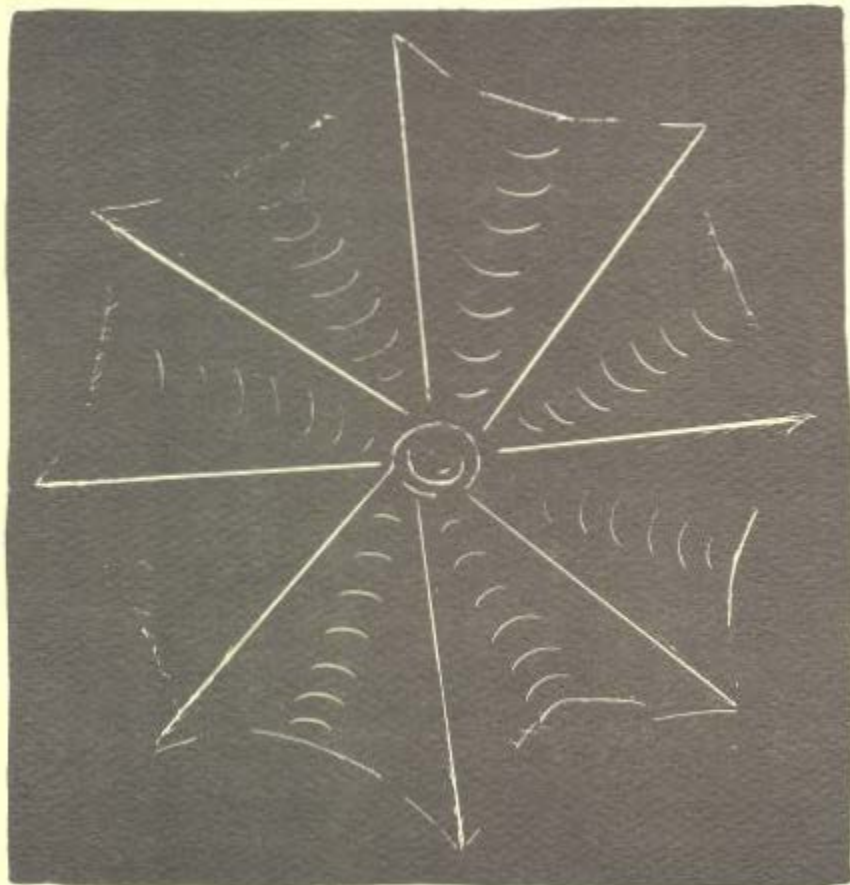
By lures that trick the sense
with fragrance and mirage.

The course of air and tide
begins to shift, to change

As the storm clouds gather
and barometers drop

Bringing the blown and tossed,
the rootless and the stray

There where the hangman's tree
and the coral reef wait.



MAYA

Slowly Maya approaches,
spinning gray silk threads

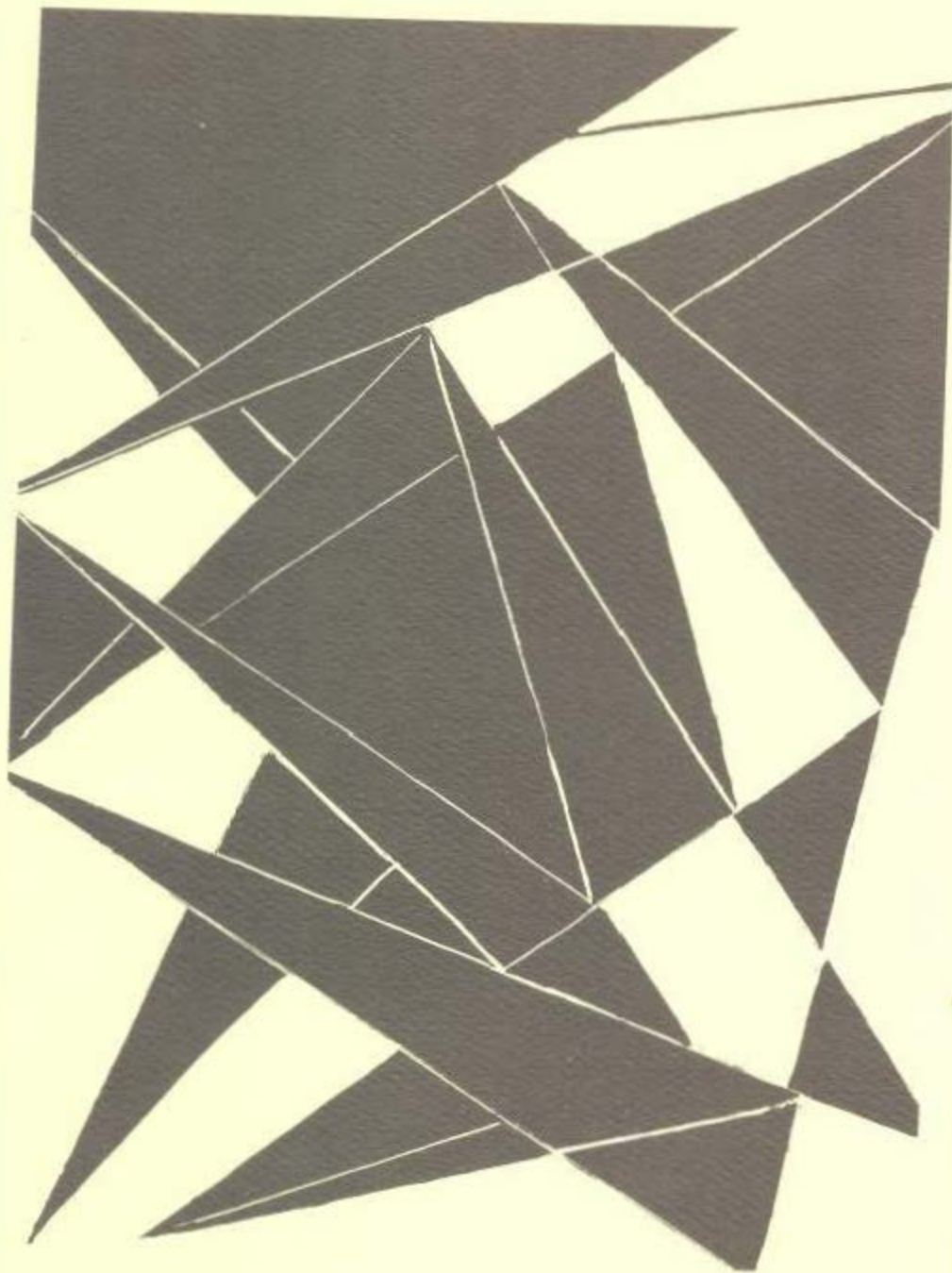
The weaver of illusions
made of dew and air

Invisible as starlight
when the sun is high

The priestess of a temple
in which dreams are snared.

Her geometric spirals
encircle a dial

Whose radiating pathways
lead strayers inside.



SETA

Now Seta dares where others fail
to set a foot

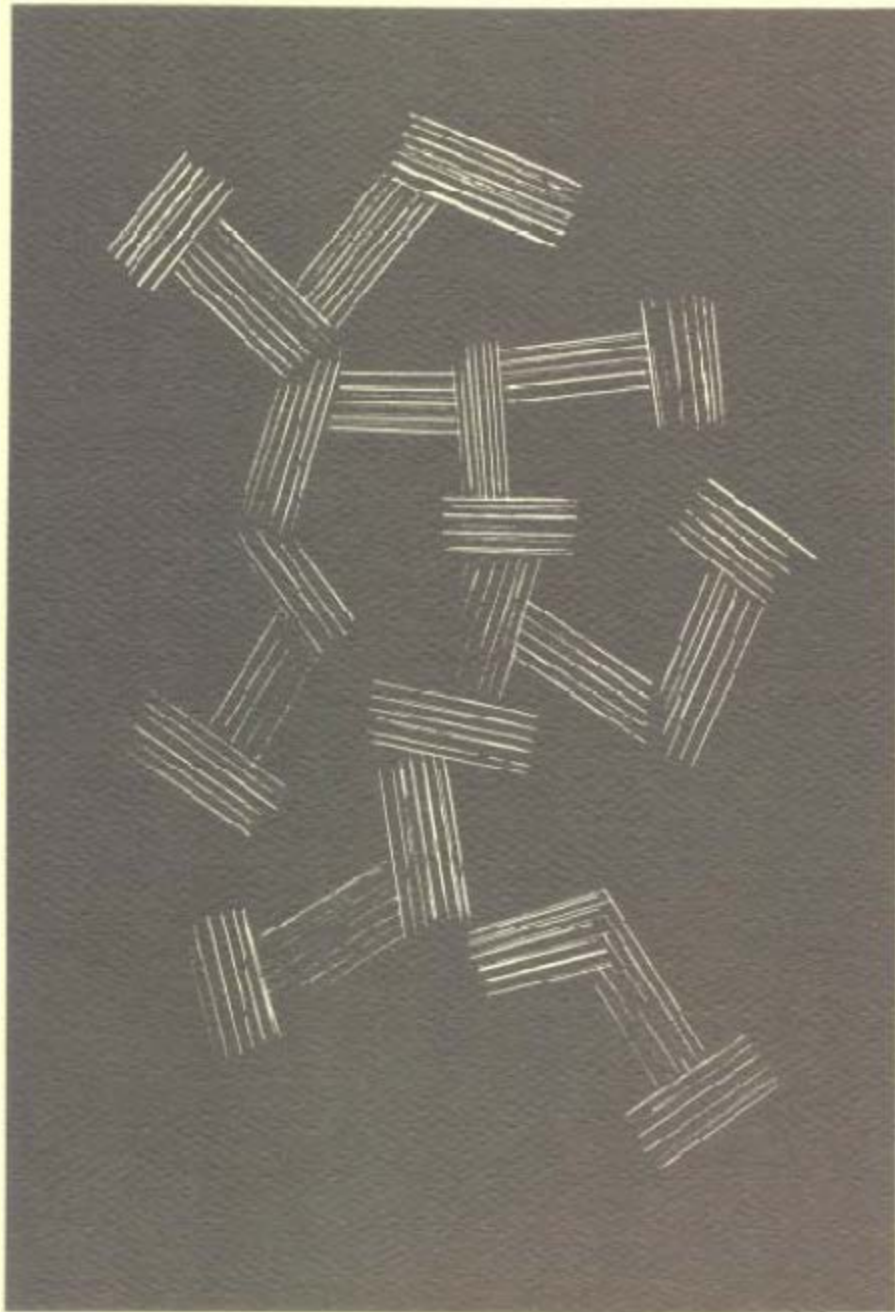
On barren ground, on arid slopes,
in shale and clay

With bristling spurs, with two-edged spears
that snag and cut

She gives shelter and recompense
to those condemned

By heat and thirst, by sand and stone,
as castaways

Growing panicles on cacti,
berries on thorns.



MANUS

The season welcomes Manus,
the bringer of gifts

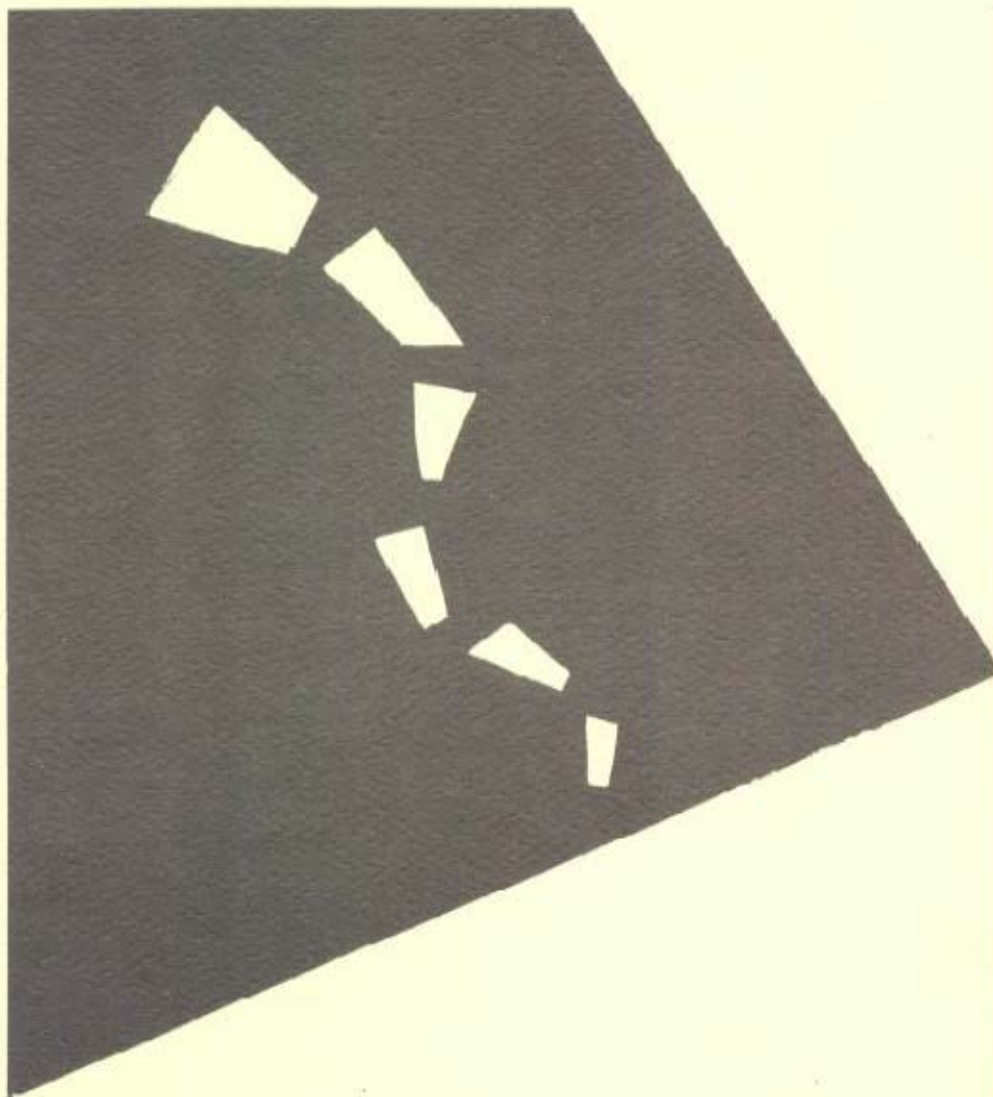
That fill the eye with color,
with greed and with lust

For the year's promised harvest
of pleasures and gains.

Such tastes and smells, fabrics, toys,
what values exchanged!

By calloused hands, hoarded coins,
poor and rich alike

Each festival forgetting
the bored, lonely days.



GERONTO

Geronto's weary steps
arrive on shuffling feet

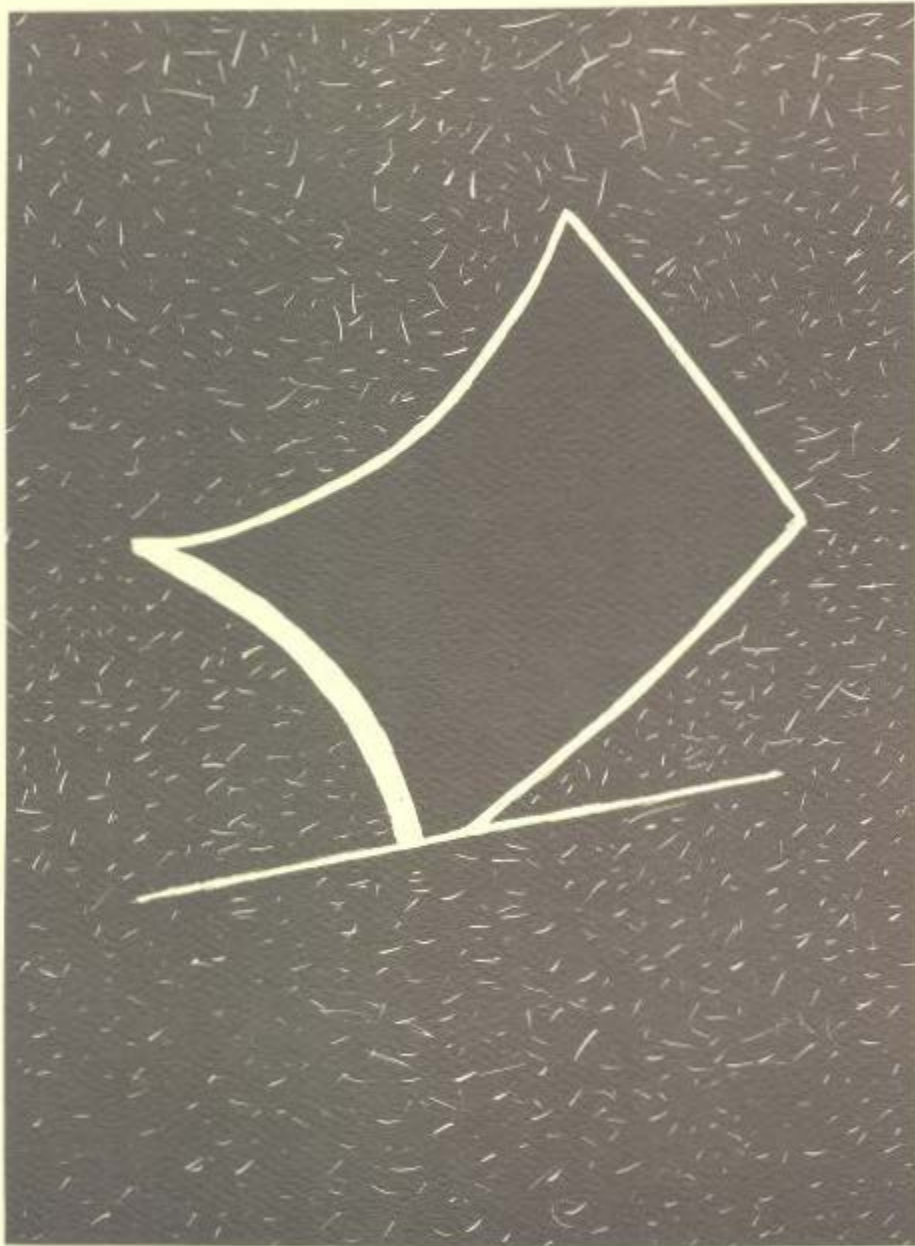
Despite the cold and frost
that sap both breath and bones

Burdened by memories,
he pauses now to rest

While the bonfire ashes
show embers underneath

Enough to thaw the hands
and stir the pulse a bit.

Then to the final stretch
downwards and through the woods.



KRYLLOS

Kryllos enters lightly,
scattering flakes of stars

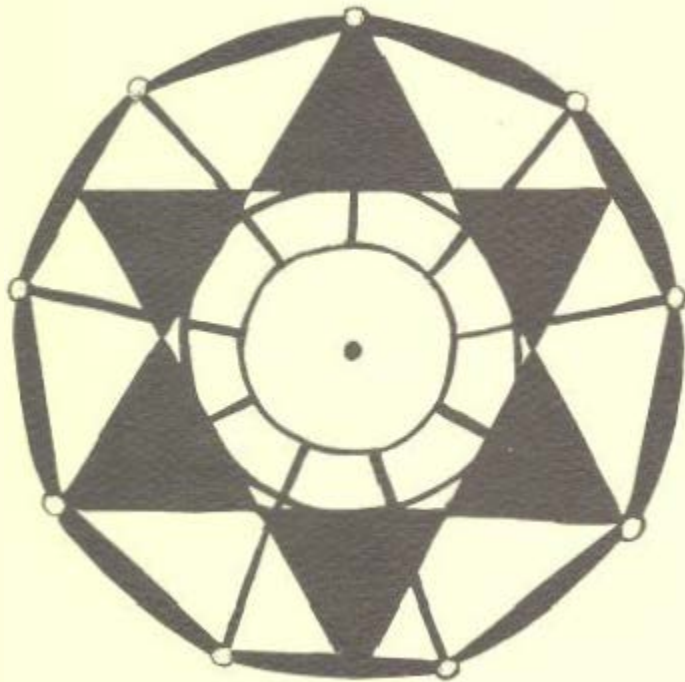
Changing dust to diamonds
and trees to icy fleets

An alchemist's cargo
sailing the winter's sea.

Passengers are sleepers
without captain or crew

Going on a journey
they may not choose or know

While blind, surrounding white
shudders at stern and bow.



GYROS

Then Gyros grabs the wheel
and spins the year to port

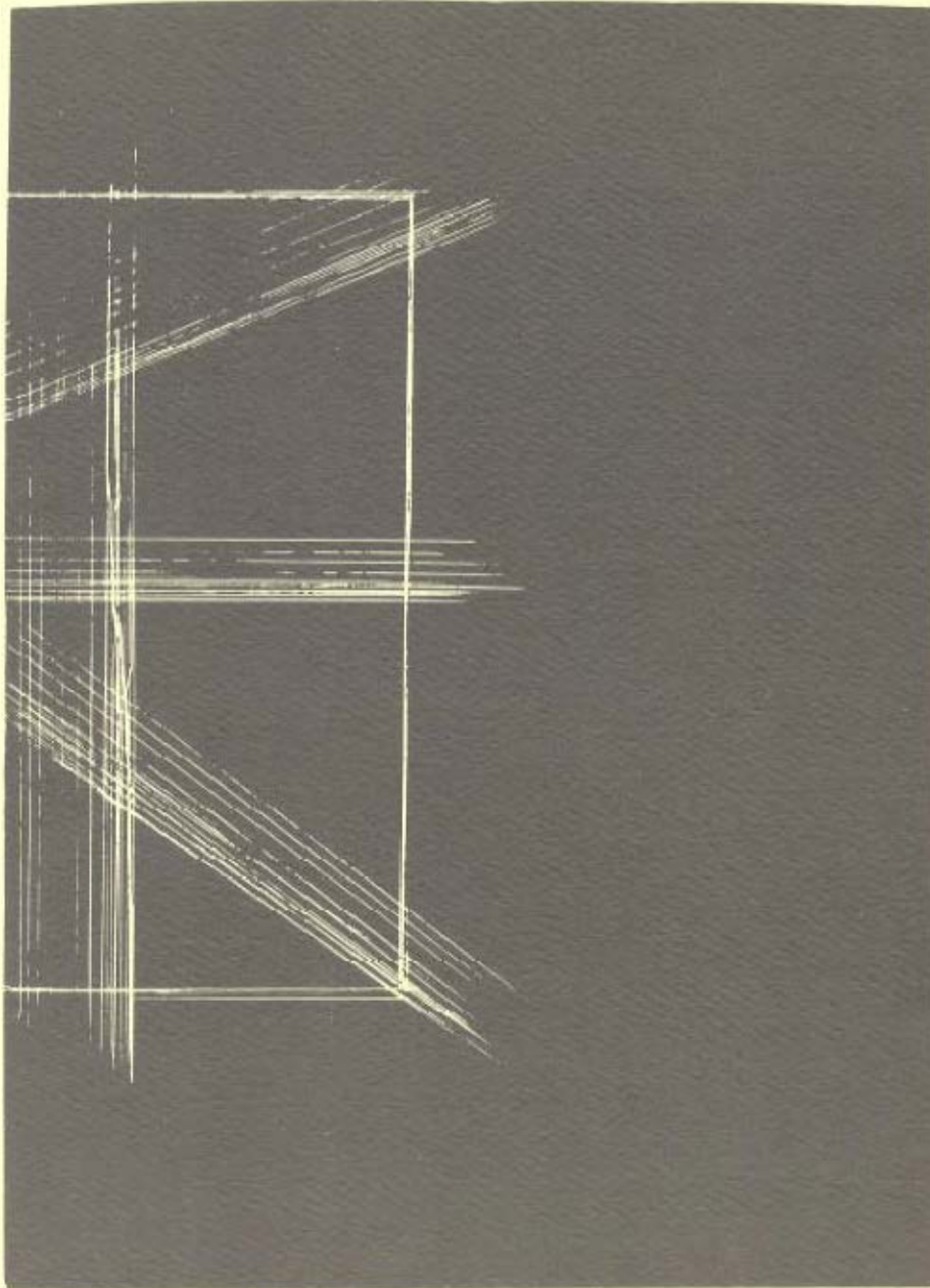
With bronze and iron spokes
firmly grooved to axle

He turns the outer gears
to orbits of the sun

Directing each planet
on one of nine cycles

Watchful for eclipses,
conjunctions and all signs

Which rule the house of life
from ascent to decline.



EPILOGUE

The mystic twelve enfold
such visions of the world

As you may see through doors
of self revelation

The essence and substance
of all that moves or sways

Your hours, days and weeks
from season to season.

In you is the being,
in you the becoming

Through tides that flow and ebb
from beginning to end.

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